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PROPOSAL

in collaboration with the
~~USAF~~ Air Force assistance, to undertake the procurement of
(a) 20 high altitude aircraft, (b) photo-reconnaissance equipment,
and (c) electronic-reconnaissance equipment, and to prepare for and
conduct extensive overflights of the Soviet Bloc in order to provide
photographic and, secondarily, electronic intelligence. (Project
AQUATONE).

SITUATION

The Lockheed Aircraft Corporation has proposed a very-high-altitude,
jet-powered ~~glider~~ *aircraft* (designated CL-282). The Corporation is willing to
take full responsibility for the design, mock-up, building, secret
testing, and field maintenance of this unorthodox vehicle. It therefore
appears entirely feasible for a CIA task force to undertake a covert
overflight program based upon the CL-282, which will fly at 70,000 feet,
well out of reach of present Russian interception and high enough to
have a good chance of avoiding detection.

Photographic equipment can be developed which will enable extra-
ordinary intelligence content to be obtained with pictures taken from
great altitudes. A single mission in clear weather can photograph
a strip of Russia 200 miles wide and ²²⁰⁰ ~~200~~ miles long. A spotting camera
will take pictures in which the individuals in a city street can be
counted from 70,000 feet. Cloud cover will reduce completeness but
is not a serious obstacle because missions can be scheduled for good

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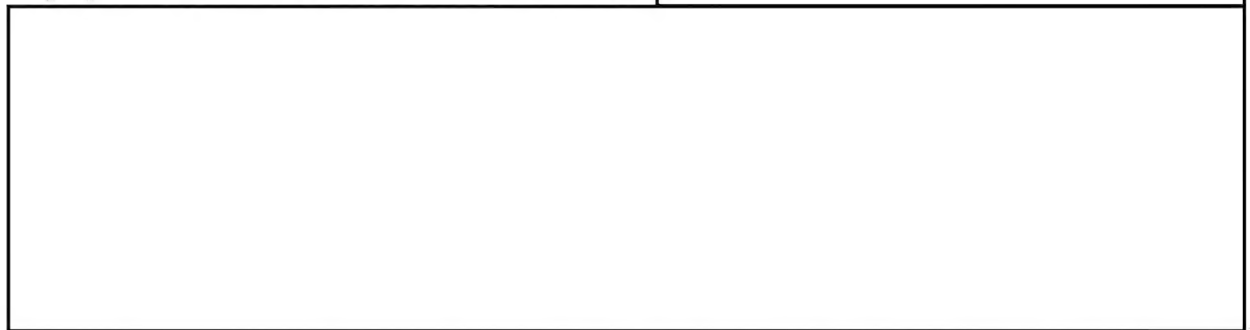
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The essence of the existing opportunity is to be exploited and to be extended by continuing development.

weather and alternate routes for clear weather can be selected in flight.

Analogously, it is believed that automatic electronic intercept equipment (ELINT gear) can be developed



The opportunity for safe overflight with the best equipment that can be built at this time will last only a year or so because the Soviets will develop radar and interceptors or guided missiles effective for the 70,000-foot region. The CL-282 can be developed and produced extraordinarily rapidly because it is based on a fighter aircraft already in production and uses an engine already tested. Moreover, experience with this aircraft will contribute significantly to the ability of the United States to maintain a lead in the development of ^{still} higher altitude aircraft and thus to maintain a safe overflight capacity. *capability*

OBJECTIVES

A → ~~The following objectives may be attained by this means:~~

- a. Improve estimates of Soviet ability to deliver nuclear weapons and their capacity to produce them.
- b. Appraise Soviet guided missile development through photographs of testing ranges, etc.

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Virtually all of which will have to be obligated in FY 1955. It can be

- c. Assess the Soviet order of battle as an early warning indicator.
- d. Provide adequate locations and analyses of Russian targets.
- e. Disclose new developments which might otherwise lead to technological surprise.
- f. Appraise Soviet industrial and economic progress.

COST

25X1

The cost of procurement ^{of material} by this Agency under the program here proposed is expected to total approximately [] broken down as follows:

20 airframes, together with maintenance and testing equipment for the testing of the first one to be delivered

25X1

6 complete sets of photographic equipment, each set consisting of 3 configurations

12 sets of electronic search equipment to be used on photographic missions,

Additional field maintenance equipment

^{TOTAL}
The margin of error in these figures probably does not exceed

[] and it is believed highly unlikely that the total ^{material} procurement

costs could amount to more than [] The estimates assume that the Air Force will furnish as a contribution to the project and without cost to the Agency (a) technical assistance and supervision, (b) all equipment regularly furnished as government furnished equipment including especially 40 engines, and (c) transportation of materiel and personnel to ^{test sites} operational bases. ~~The above figures contain no allowance for~~

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(a) administrative costs, including especially the cost of developing photo-intelligence and electronic-intelligence requirements, of mission planning, and of pilot recruitment and training, ^(c) (b) the cost of actually mounting the operation, including pay and subsistence of personnel, transportation of personnel and materiel and field maintenance, ^{in and between operational bases,} and (d) the cost of processing photographic film and electronic tape.

ORGANIZATION

It is proposed that this undertaking be organized as a joint CIA/Air Force project in which CIA will undertake procurement as indicated above with the assistance of the Air Force in all phases and will conduct the overflights as a clandestine operation. Within the CIA, the Special Assistant to the Director for Planning and Coordination (SA/PC/DCI) will be in charge of the project, with Mr. Herbert Miller as Executive Officer. He will be supported by other officers temporarily assigned on a part-time or full-time basis as appropriate. Sub-projects will be organized ^{together with} ~~initially~~ as components of AQUATONE covering the performance of all the following functions:

25X1
25X1

ILLEGIB

1. Airframe procurement (Project OARFISH)
2. Procurement of photo-reconnaissance equipment (Project [redacted])
3. Development and procurement of electronic equipment (Project [redacted])
4. Assembly and formulation of photo-intelligence requirements (Project EQUINE)
5. Assembly and formulation of electronic-intelligence requirements
6. Pilot recruitment and training (Project [redacted]) (Project [redacted])

At a later stage, other component projects will be organized as required.

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended

- a. That the project be approved as outlined above.
- b. That the Special Assistant to the Director for Planning and Coordination be designated as the official in charge of the project and as Approving Officer, subject to the guidance of the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and the Director of Central Intelligence.
- c. That the procurement of the airframes, photo-reconnaissance equipment and electronic equipment up to the amounts indicated above be authorized, subject to the following provisions:

(1) Procurement and contractual arrangements will be those normally employed by the Agency, with such exemptions and restrictions designed to achieve maximum security as may be approved by the ^{Approving} ~~Project~~ Officer.

(2) All contractual and procurement documents ~~and~~ ^{and commitments} arrangements ^{in advance} will be specifically approved by the General Counsel.

(3) All ^{commitments and} documents which obligate funds in excess of

will be approved by the Director of Central Intelligence.

(4) Appropriate documentation will be obtained from the Air Force and from competent technical advisers in support of procurement contracts and the specifications and descriptions of material to which they refer.

Insert
C → ~~e. 4~~ That the Comptroller be authorized to expend funds in the manner and to the extent approved by the Approving Officer within the

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as other necessary ~~in~~ in preparation for the recruiting of overflights be authorized, together with

limitations as to quantity and procedure set forth above.

d. That the recruitment and training of pilots, ~~initially~~ ^{initially} expenses incidental thereto up to the amount of ^{blank}

f. That the ^{Approving} ~~Project~~ Officer be authorized to arrange for the necessary gathering and formulation of intelligence requirements and ~~the necessary~~ mission planning, in cooperation with the Air Force as appropriate.

g. That the ^{Approving} ~~Project~~ Officer be directed to maintain the closest possible security over all phases of AQUATONE.

Concern

Signed

SA/PC / DCI

DDCI

DDA

DDI

DDP

GC

APPROVED:

Director of Central Intelligence

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INSERT A

Although undertaken primarily to collect photographic and electronic intelligence, this operation will serve a variety of purposes of interest to various parts of the United States Government. The CL-282 will have major utility as a high altitude testplatform. The research to be undertaken will include the testing of engine performance, pressurization, and the functioning of auxiliary equipment of all kinds as well as of electronic and photographic equipment at high altitudes. It will also include a study of the capabilities of personnel to perform missions requiring sustained flight at high altitudes and of the utility of equipment furnished to permit personnel to function more effectively. 25X1

25X1

[REDACTED] In the field of intelligence, the operation should contribute significantly to the attainment of the following objectives:

and (c) ~~some part or all of~~
the cost of ~~testing~~ ~~equipment~~ in the United States.

The cost of ~~testing~~ ~~equipment~~
has not yet been
estimated. They
will fall ~~entirely~~
FY 1956.

INSERT B

In addition to the above, there ~~will be~~ certain non-materiel ~~will be incurred~~ costs in the course of preparation for the mounting of the operation. These will be primarily (a) administrative costs, including especially the cost of developing photo-intelligence and electronic-intelligence requirements, and of mission planning, ~~and~~ (b) the cost of pilot recruitment and training. It is expected that administrative costs can be largely absorbed in existing budgets, ~~and the pilot recruitment and training costs will not exceed~~ in FY 1955, plus a somewhat larger amount in FY 1956.

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spaces for
accounts

The above figures contain no allowance for (a) any major costs that may be incurred in the acquisition or preparation of operational bases, (b) the cost of actually mounting the operation, including pay and subsistence of personnel, transportation of personnel and materiel to and between operational bases, and field maintenance, and (c) the cost of processing photographic film and electronic tape.

ORGANIZATION

In view of the clandestine character of the proposed operation, its nature, and the varied results expected to flow from it, it is proposed that this undertaking be organized as a joint CIA/Air Force project in which the CIA will undertake procurement as indicated above, with the assistance of the Air Force in all phases, and will conduct overflights as a clandestine operation.

INSERT C

Para c sub para (5)

(5) Prior to the signing of definitive contracts, the ^{Approving}~~Authorizing~~ Officer, in conjunction with the Air Force and relying upon suitable technical advice, will develop performance standards. ^{He}~~It~~ will arrange for adequate inspection, by Air Force or other technically competent personnel, prior to ^{the}~~the~~ acceptance of materiel.